

# Bloomers on the washing line: The use of metaphor in EDI developments at Hertfordshire DCLinPsy

## Introduction

Collective consideration of our EDI endeavours included actions taken, spaces that have sprung up, and reflection on challenges in doing this work. The idiom of “airing our dirty laundry” was conjured when considering how to share recent developments whilst not shying away from things that were challenging or difficult in our ongoing EDI work.

We draw on metaphor to tell our story, referencing how this provides an oblique approach to topics that might otherwise feel too threatening, how symbolising experiences and discomfort that EDI discussions invariably provoke allows us to better tolerate them, and how engaging in creative dialogue builds on and alters a symbolic representation, mobilising active participation and collective creativity in group processes for creative resistance against oppressive systems.

## Interpretive notes

Please use the metaphors below and on the image when interpreting the contents of this presentation.

**Stains** symbolise feelings and challenges that come with this work - shame, fear, our own contexts and history around both having difficult conversations and experiences of marginalisation. They come from daily wear and tear and from getting into the work, grappling with the process. ‘Stains’ can make it hard to stay connected to each other, our values and intentions, and purposes. How do we live with the stains that don’t wash away when we keep the same conversations on ‘rinse and repeat’?

**Patches** on the bloomers symbolise times we got it wrong with each other and trainees. Decisions are made about whether to patch it up to hide the damage/brokenness, or being explicit about where we have got things wrong and where we have done some learning (personally or collectively). We ask, have we used the right stitch when patching things up? Does that mean holes and ruptures return? Sometimes it is about trial and error but doing this with care.

## Key references reflecting recent research done to support the work:

Baig, O. (2024). How do trainees from Cohort 21 make sense of their Brave and Compassionate Spaces experiences? Ball, F. (2022). No conversation about us with us - evaluation of service user involvement in the DCLinPsy programme. Capleton, P. (ongoing). Exploring the Intersectionality of Race, Culture and Social class on Black Trainees’ Professional Identity Formation during Clinical Psychology Training. Comerford, J. (2024). How do mothers experience doctoral level training in clinical psychology in the UK? Dunira, A. (2024). Exploring Black Trainees’ experiences of reflective practice spaces during clinical psychology training. Esterhuizen, J. (ongoing). Examining Whiteness in anti-racism work. Francis, D. (2022). Racial equity and decolonisation within the DCLinPsy: How far have we come and where are we going? Hussain, S. (2024). Exploring conflict and repair within UH Doctorate of Clinical Psychology trainee-spaces. Hussain, S. (ongoing). The concept of the soul, anarchism, and abolition in envisioning holistic care.

Katsampa, D. (2022). Decolonising research in clinical psychology: A qualitative exploration of trainee and staff perspectives. Katsampa, D. (2023). ‘Striving and thriving together’: Reflections from carrying out a programme-related project on decolonising research in clinical psychology. Mooneapillay, E. (ongoing). Navigating mental health as a parent-trainee on the Clinical Psychology Doctorate Course. Mountford, M. (2023). Dilemmas of self-disclosure: A Grounded Theory Analysis of Trainee Clinical Psychologists’ Use of Self-Disclosure in Problem-Based Learning. Nersey, N. (ongoing). How is Harm Socially Reproduced in Clinical Psychology: Racial Capitalism, Carcerality and Psychological Safety. Parikh, T. (ongoing). Experiences of Social Justice on DCLinPsy training. Patel, S. (2021). Evaluation of the DCLinPsy admissions database. Pillay, S. (2022). Evaluation of the diversity of DCLinPsy selection panels. Saini, G. (2023). PBL and me: How Racially-Minoritised Trainees Make Sense of Their Problem-Based Learning Experiences. Thakkar, S. (2022). Selection Procedures: Contextual Admissions. Zambakides, H. (ongoing). The experience of moral injury in mental health clinicians with lived experience of systemic injustice.

The **woods** symbolise our wider culture and structures, experiencing the same difficulties and challenges.



**Pegs** symbolise efforts made to come together in dialogue, acknowledging that pegs may break and need replacing, so acknowledging a need to continue to reflect on these ways of coming together and continue to innovate, e.g., through our Thinking Action Spaces, Reflective Space, Trainee Council, Praxis Groups.



The **washing line** is our hope to do better and be better as a profession, as a programme, and as individuals. What is placed in the sunshine and what gets left in the shade; who decides? How do we remain self-reflexive and thoughtfully consider how we arrange the bloomers on the line, while also enacting the political resistance they represent?

**Bloomers** - the most intimate laundry and symbols of resistance – represent the trickier things to talk about, challenges we’ve faced, private dilemmas, and recognising the different stories, different sizes, and different relationships to sharing our private garments. Can we see the full spectrum of colours on the washing line *and* see in black and white, or must we choose?

**Poles** symbolise accreditation standards, guidance, and policy; expectations and frameworks. They do not flex, shaping how tight or loose the line is, and how much can fit on it, e.g., HCPC, BPS, Doctoral College, internal EDI strategy, internal micro aggression framework.

The **basket** represents our commitment to each other and the process, carrying the laundry from the washing machine to the line, where we hope to hang things in a more orderly fashion.



The **laundry hanging out to dry** is the collective sharing of wisdom.

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The **clearing for the line** to hang the washed bloomers makes space for things to spring up and grow: the **mycelium** and the **mushrooms**: our burgeoning ideas and solidarity spaces, e.g., Trainee Council, Thinking Action Spaces, Trainee-led DCLinPsy research, parent-trainees and planetary health groups.